

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
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R 061135 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9769
INFO CINCPAC
CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

S E C R E T SAIGON 5818

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINT, PINS, VS
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER KHIEM' S VIEWS ON TONG LE CHAN SITUATION

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: STATE 063076

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT REFTEL I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER KHIEM WHO SEEMS RELAXED AND SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT TONG LE CHANG. HE MENTIONED THAT MORALE OF THE GARRISON IS VERY HIGH AND THAT COMMANDER IS EXCELLENT. KHIEM SAID THAT TODAY FOUR OUT OF 10 SUPPLY BUNDLES HAD BEEN SAFELY DROPPED WITHIN PERIMETER. (DAO ESTIMATES THAT ONLY 6 OUT OF 60 HAVE REACHED THE GARRISON.) I NOTED THAT B-62 S HAD UNDERTAKEN SOME STRIKES ON THE CAMBODIAN SIDE OF BORDER WHICH WE HOPED WOULD BE OF ASSISTANCE TO DEFENSE OF POST.

2. I LEFT TALKING PAPER WITH KHIEM, EMBODYING MAIN POINTS OF REFTEL, AFTER GOING OVER THE IMPORTANCE OF GVN APPLYING THE TERMS OF ARTICLE 4 OF THE PROTOCOL ON THE CEASE- FIRE. KHIEM SAID THAT HE HAD ALREADY INSTRUCTED LTG THUAN (CHIEF OF GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC) TO INFORM THE PRG THAT THE GVN AGREED TO A MEETING WITH THE ENEMY COMMANDER, AND THAT THE GVN WOULD BE REPRESENTED BY THE TONG LE CHAN COMMANDER AND A SPECIAL TEAM OF NEGOTIATORS. HE INDICATED THAT PROPOSAL WOULD BE MADE AT NEXT MEETING OF CHIFS OF TPJMC (SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10). KHIEM

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LATER RETURNED TO SUBJECT, ASKING WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF THE PROPOSAL IS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE PRG. I NOTED THE ISOLATED LOCATION OF POST AND DIFFICULTY OF SUPPLYING IT. KHIEM CONCLUDED THAT WE MUST BE PATIENT IN EXPLORING DIPLOMATIC AND ICC

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6. THE DAO AND WE SHARE THE VIEW THAT THE CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF THE PLANNED RELIEF EXPEDITION ARE NOT BRIGHT. THE ENEMY IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE THE 165 AND 201 AND 529 REGIMENTS IN THE GENERAL VICINITY AND THE 18 TH ARVN MIGHT WELL GET INTO A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION. THE 18 TH ARVN IS NOT NOTED FOR ITS AGGRESSIVENESS AND IS UNLIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE WITHOUT MASSIVE AIR SUPPORT.

WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON05818
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730434/aaaahsej.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 73 STATE 06076
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Dec-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <28-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971202
Subject: PRIME MINISTER KHIEM' S VIEWS ON TONG LE CHAN SITUATION
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, VS, PINT
To: CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB
CINCPAC
SECSTATE WASHDC
SS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005